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ABSTRACT

Meeting the needs of migrant families through the Orange County Extension's 4-H and Home Economics Divisions is the theme of this 1968 report compiled by New York State Cooperative Extension Service. The objectives of both extension divisions include providing opportunities for migrant women and youths to learn by doing projects which help them improve their self-confidence, leadership abilities, and home and family living. A summer program set up to carry out these objectives was designed. Youths were offered a 6-week program in food, clothing, arts and crafts, recreation, and conservation, while adults took part in an 8-week session on grooming, foods and nutrition, storage techniques, and clothing construction. Volunteer workers helped fill staff needs, along with 2 extension home economists and the director of Migrant Family Clinic. The program effort was reported to be extremely successful, and it was suggested that a continual effort to cross cultural, racial, economic, and geographic lines would hasten better understanding between migrants and the community. (AN)

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SPECIAL PROGRAM REPORT

MEETING THE NEEDS OF MIGRANT FAMILIES

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"Learning By Doing"

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Orange County Cooperative Extension has for several years been aware of the needs of Migrant Agricultural workers and their families. Extension provided leadership in the development of a Family Health Clinic and has conducted numerous 4-H and Home Economics programs for adults and youth.

During the summer of 1968 4-H and Home Economics program offerings were made available on a greatly expanded scale. This concentrated effort reached 150 children who participated 2 hours per day for six weeks in a 4-H program and 25 adults who took part in the home economics sessions over a period of eight weeks.

Youth were offered projects in foods, clothing, arts and crafts, recreation and conservation, while adults took part in grooming, foods and nutrition, storage techniques and clothing construction.

The enthusiasm shown for the expanded program indicates the need to offer more opportunities for this audience in the future.

4-H Objectives

The established goals of the 4-H program included:

1. Teaching specifics of individual projects such as clothing, foods, arts & crafts and recreation.
2. Involving 4-H Junior Leaders with migrant children to acquaint both groups with a different way of life.
3. Inspire leadership abilities in the migrant children and 4-H'ers involved.
4. To help the migrant children gain a sense of confidence in themselves and in the community.
5. Provide worthwhile programs and activities for migrant children during after school hours.

The Home Economics Objectives Were:

- To provide educational programs and activities for migrant women designed to furnish them with information to help them improve their home and family living.
- The following program objectives were established to provide migrant women with information on:—
  1. Clothing Construction in order that they might develop skills in using sewing equipment and working with fabric.
  2. Proper care of hair, skin, hands and feet.
  3. Practical storage ideas adaptable to a variety of situations.
  4. Importance of an adequate diet — including basic four foods.
  5. Food preparation ideas which are economical, easy to prepare and nutritious.

Planning a Program

It is estimated that each year 1500 migrant workers arrive in Orange County to plant, raise and harvest onions, lettuce and celery. Many of these workers are accompanied by their families and live in the Pine Island area. A day care center and summer school are available to the children. The number of families taking advantage of these opportunities has been increasing steadily over the last few years.

The first organized 4-H program directed by a 4-H summer assistant and adult leaders reached seventy five migrant children. Project work was carried on two days a week for a period of five weeks. Each participant took part in approximately fifteen hours of program and activity.

It was evident that an expanded program was necessary for the future. Funds were made available in 1968 for one staff member, equipment and program materials. Many donations were made — patterns, yard goods, utensils, food, arts and crafts materials and a generous donation of the use of two buildings plus recreation facilities located on several acres of land.

Plans were made to bus the children to the area after school four days a week to participate in activities from 2:30 - 4:00 P.M.

The adult program was scheduled to be held in the Migrant Family Clinic facilities located in Pine Island. These facilities included a modern kitchen, ample table space and work area.

The women met once a week for a two hour discussion and work session from 7:30 to 9:30 P.M.

Volunteers

The program was dependent upon volunteers and recruitment became a major task. Twelve 4-H Junior leaders supported by adult 4-H leaders and interested community people helped to fill out staff needs. Volunteers participation on any given day was as high as twenty and as low as 3. Many of the 4-H Junior leaders were on hand 4 days a week for the entire 6 week program.

Both adult and Junior leaders found their summer experiences with the migrant children demanding and extremely rewarding. The most effective volunteers were committed to this program and possessed imagination plus flexibility.

Future programs will need to add several additional paid staff members in order to asure as much individual instruction as possible.

The adult program was conducted by the two Extension Home Economists with the assistance of the Director of the Migrant Family Clinic.

Program

During the 6 week program girls in the clothing project made dresses, skirts, aprons, pillows, pocketbooks, head scarves and doll clothes. Although equipment and instructors were not adequate in number the results in spite of limitations were outstanding. Thirteen girls proudly modeled their dresses and skirts at a dress revue. This was a new experience for all who participated.

There were 45 5-8 year olds attending the program. Special attention had to be given to activities geared to their level. Their participation was limited to hand sewing, working mainly with felt to make animal shaped bean bags, change purses, felt boards and doll clothes. A collection of 20 dolls was available for the children to bathe, groom and dress.

Foods, of course, proved to be most popular for both boys and girls. Everyone had the opportunity to make cookies, brownies, cakes and other simple items.

Particular attention was given to establishing good habits — clean hands, clean utensils, proper food storage, hot water and soap for clean up, etc.

The recreation program was supervised by a physical education instructor with the assistance of volunteer adults and 4-H members. The limited number of volunteers available prohibited grouping by age. Softball, football, basketball and games were offered. Swings and other play equipment were also available for use by younger children. This effort could be expanded greatly in future years.

Nature walks, and activity developed spontaneously, proved to be interesting and successful. The children, lacking education in the field of nature, were anxious to learn names of trees, wild life, weeds and clouds. These walks served as a way to make the children much more aware of their surroundings and also provided a time to talk with the children individually.

During the eight week program for the women, they learned to operate a sewing machine and make simple articles of clothing for themselves or family members. Practical storage ideas were discussed and the women made canister sets to store staple goods in their kitchens. A demonstration of an inexpensive master mix was given which lends itself to the making of a variety of products including biscuits, muffins and cakes. These products are nutritious and easy to prepare from the mix.

One of the meetings of most interest to the women was the grooming meeting at which time proper care of hair, skin, hands and feet was discussed.

Many aspects of grooming and personal health were brought into the program in coordination with school programs in the same area.

What About The Future?

The effort with migrant children was extremely successful. The youth involved did definitely change in a very positive way during the 6 week program.

Migrant children need the opportunity to live by the 4-H slogan "Learn By Doing" just as Extension has an obligation to live up to the 4-H Motto: "To Make The Best Better".

More volunteers and more staff will be in order for the future. An effort should be made to send records of children's 4-H work to the States to which they move. Similar programs should be conducted in other States. A coordinated and continued program for these children regardless of their place of residence at any given time would be beneficial.

More in depth programs should be offered along with a wide variety of 4-H projects. Numerous activities should be planned to provide interesting and educational experiences.

The program for the migrant women was extremely successful and attracted many more women than was anticipated. The programs provided an opportunity for women of all ages and backgrounds to meet together to discuss topics of general interest concerning their homes and families.

We feel that the programs another year might be divided into discussion meetings of general interest for all with smaller group meetings for those with a specific interest such as clothing construction and foods. This division would make it possible for us to give more individdual attention to those attending the smaller group meetings.

A continual effort to cross cultural, racial, economic and geographic lines will hasten better understanding among migrants and the community.